

Senior Colloquium in Cognitive Science

CGSC 491

Spring 2019

Instructor:	Mark Sheskin	
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Time/Location:	Thursdays, 9:25-11:15; Location WTS B60	
Office Hours:	Thursdays, 12:30-1:30; SSS 205 H	(inside “Panda Lab”)
Course Website:	on Canvas	

Overview

This course is required for majors in Cognitive Science as they complete their senior projects. The purposes include (a) helping students write the thesis by providing piecemeal due dates, (b) learning about and engaging in the peer review process, and (c) learning about other students’ research through presentations and peer review.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Each student will give a presentation once during the semester, consisting of approximately 25 minutes of content plus 10 minutes for discussion afterwards. Students who present earlier in the semester will be expected to have more preliminary progress towards their projects compared to those who present later in the semester. The nature of the feedback will also likely change during the semester, but the expectation is that valuable discussion and feedback can be gained at any time throughout the semester.

Each student will also engage in a peer review process with several other students: each student will peer review a thesis draft from three other students. Each student will also receive at least three peer reviews (the number may be more than 3, since I plan to peer review some and to recruit additional peer reviewers from outside the course). In response to the anonymous peer reviews, each student will revise their thesis and produce a cover letter detailing the changes.

Grades are determined largely by the final thesis, which is evaluated by two professors (the thesis advisor and a second professor I select). However, the grade can be raised or lowered by performance in the course. Typically, the variability from course performance will modify grades by no more than two steps (e.g., a grade of B from the readers would typically result in a grade of B in the course, and would almost always lead to a grade between C+ and A-).

Due Dates

Yale provides zero flexibility for being late with your final thesis. It **MUST** be in on time. Your draft must be on time so that your peer reviewers have the full time they expect, and your peer reviews must be on time so the other seniors have the full time expected to implement changes.

Laptops

Before I took it over in 2016, this class had a laptop ban. In 2016, I allowed laptops and then asked the Seniors for feedback at the end of the semester. A majority of responses (on an anonymous survey) indicated that laptops should NOT be allowed in the future. The 2017 Seniors (who were then not allowed to use laptops), again voted in favor of banning them for 2018, and 2018 banned them for you. All of this is to say that laptops are banned during student presentations (though you can use them when I am leading discussion the first two days). I will elicit your feedback about this rule at the end of the semester (so you can help decide the fate of next year's Seniors!). See also:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/27/learning/should-teachers-and-professors-ban-student-use-of-laptops-in-class.html>

Statement on Academic Integrity

Please do not violate academic integrity during this course. Most notably, do not plagiarize. As defined in the Yale College Undergraduate Regulations (1), “Plagiarism is the use of someone else’s work, words, or ideas as if they were one’s own.” There are many reasons to avoid plagiarism. Two of them highlighted in materials from the Yale College Writing Center (2) are that plagiarism is a “detriment to your intellectual and moral development” and that “Yale punishes academic dishonesty severely.” The Yale Writing Center has many resources you can consult to learn how to use sources properly and avoid plagiarism (3). Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or wish to discuss any of this information in more detail.

(1) http://yalecollege.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/URegs_14-15.pdf

(2) <http://writing.yalecollege.yale.edu/advice-faculty/addressing-plagiarism/sample-plagiarism-warnings>

(3) <http://writing.yalecollege.yale.edu/advice-students/using-sources>

Calendar

- An alternate thesis timeline is available: draft due March 25th, peer reviews due April 1st.
- All meetings from January 31st onward will have student presentations.

17 January	Introduction, fill out thesis and presentation survey
24 January	Discuss sample peer reviews and previous essays
31 January	
7 February	One page summary to advisor and msheskin+cgsc491@gmail.com
14 February	
21 February	
28 February	
7 March	Thesis draft due to advisor and msheskin+cgsc491@gmail.com
BREAK	
28 March	Peer reviews due to msheskin+cgsc491@gmail.com
4 April	
11 April	Cover letter due to msheskin+cgsc491@gmail.com
18 April	
*22 April	Final essay due (to advisor, dropbox, and msheskin+cgsc491@gmail.com)
25 April	Celebration